2: Becher--i E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

/V/

Foreword

114. 101 This monograph contains the results of a nine-month investigation which I conducted from October 1955 to June 1956 among two Indian tribes of northwest Brazil which are as yet unknown to science.

121 My journey and the analysis of its results were made possible through the generous support of the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft /German Research Association/, for which I am deeply indebted to it.

114 I should like cordially to thank my esteemed teacher, Herr Prof. Dr. Franz Termer, for regarding this work, the completion of which he supported actively and in an advisory capacity, worthy of inclusion in the series of reports of the Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte /Museum for Ethnology and Prehistory/.

I was encouraged by Herr Prof. Darcy Ribeiro, head of the study division of the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, to seek out these as yet uninvestigated tribes north of the middle Rio Negro. [122] Through his efforts I also obtained the approval of the Director and was given all possible assistance by this organization founded by Marshal Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, as well as a free flight with a military plane from Rio de Janeiro to Manaus. Hence I feel a sincere desire to express my gratitude to the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, especially to Herr Prof. Darcy Ribeiro and the Brazilian Air Force.

122 I thank the University of São Paulo, above all the Dean, Herr Dr. Paulo Sawaya, and the Assistant Dean Herr Prof. Dr. Antonio Soares Amora, for granting me a stipend from June 1954 to September 1955, which made it possible for me to broaden my knowledge of Brazilian ethnology under such outstanding scholars as Herr Prof. Dr. Herbert Baldus and Herr Prof. Dr. Egon Schaden and to prepare myself thoroughly for the subsequent work in the field. To these two gentlemen I shall remain deeply indebted.

114 Valuable advice which was very useful to me on my expedition was given me by Herr Prof. Dr. med. Henrique da Rocha Lima (†).

/V cont./

114 as well as by Herr Prof. Dr. José Antonio Benton, Herr Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Saake, S.V.D., Herr Harald Schultz and Frau Wilma, all of São Paulo.

I found helpful assistance in Manaus on the part of Herr Alipio Edmundo Lage, the head of the I. Inspetoria Regional do Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, as well as in the small German colony there on the part of the families of Prof. Dr. Harald Sioli, Kurt Polack, and Gerhard Lindenberg.

122 With profound gratitude I mention my kind friends, the
123 Surára and Pakidái Indians, who were so hospitable to me and indefatigably helpful in my work; they are primarily the ones who deserve credit for the successful outcome of the undertaking.
[115] Above all the Surára chief Hewemão and his brothers Kurikayawõ and Inxinemá, my little interpreter Jibeauwõ (see p. 258), and the Pakidái chief Karenauõ and the war chief Porẽhiwõ deserve special mention here.

I also owe much to my faithful servant, the Tukano /Tucano/ Indian Mateus Dias, a member of the Indian protection post Ajuricaba on the middle Rio Demini. He was an indispensable helper to me in all emergencies during these nine months.

/VI/ I am likewise very much indebted, however, to the Brazilian country people on the Rio Negro and on the Demini and Aracá rivers, as well as to the personnel of the Indian protection post Ajuricaba on the middle Demini and the mission station of the Salesians in Barcelos. No matter where I went, I was shown such hospitality as is scarcely imaginable. Mention should be made here above all of the Spanish planter, Manuel Antonio Gómez, of the Rio Aracá, and the German nun, Klara Jakob, of the Salesian mission in Barcelos, who devotedly nursed me during my attacks of malaria. Equal thanks are due the physicians and sisters in the Hospital de Isolamento "Emilio Ribas" in São Paulo, where, after my return, I was treated without charge for two months and cured of a serious liver infection.

114 I thank Herr Dr. Koch and Herr Müller of the Bayer branch
122 in Rio de Janeiro for the medicines they donated. This made it possible for me to help many sick Indians and caboclos and to alleviate my own sufferings.

/135 cont./

114 however, Čiriana and Čapakura are still to be regarded as two
197 independent linguistic groups.

128 In the following, only a small selection of Surára words
197 are offered, along with the corresponding words of Waika (according to Schuster) (16), Karimé (according to Salathé, 1932),

• [122]

16. My sincerest thanks are due Herr Dr. Meinhard Schuster, Frankfurt, for the willingness with which he put at my disposal an excerpt of the Waika linguistic material that he is working on.

Širianá (according to Koch-Grünberg, 1928), and Warema (according to Visci, 1956), in order to illustrate the close relationship that exists between these languages. The chief criterion for the selection was the availability of documented forms in the five languages; moreover, care was also taken to draw on words of a "non-cultural" nature for the most part, that is, /136/ those that are not so frequently taken over by neighboring languages and thus -- if agreeing morphologically and in meaning -- represent stronger proof of the genetic relationship of the languages compared. Becher's linguistic notes were made chiefly with Surára
114 informants; for the designations of body parts, however, there were also additional forms (marked by P) which a Pakidái informant gave him.

104 The transcription of the five lists has been standardized;
194 that of Karimé has also been simplified somewhat by the fact that two h̲ and ʃ̲ sounds not adequately described by Salathé have been reproduced simply as h̲ and ʃ̲. With respect to the transcription, the following should be noted: ə̲ = middle, back (or central), unrounded vowel; ɨ̲ = high, back (or central), unrounded vowel; ã̲, etc. = nasal vowel; ɛ = open e̲; š̲ = unvoiced, alveopalatal fricative; x̲ = unvoiced, palatal fricative; ? = glottal stop; : = length for the previous sound.

Guahibo SC14 Sanema
Yabarana 5522 Saliva 5515
Makiritare 5520 Panare 5521

/13 cont./ searching primarily for a new source of food and not so much for a better means of communication. The typical Venezuelan Caribe, at least at the present time, is a man who loves land (Pemón, Cariña, Panare, Yabarana, Yupa), and the Makiritare, river men, represent an exception among them.

According to the relative importance which the river has among the different tribes, nuclei of them are found along the principal aquatic arteries, such as those of the Makiritare, or at a distance from them, on the tributaries and headwaters, as among the Panare, Yabarana, Guahibo, and Sanemá. This circumstance is of the utmost importance for the study of these Indians. The farther away they live from the river, the more difficult it is to make contact and to live with them. Thus the Panare are even less known than are the Makiritare and the Piaroa, and we are presenting in the present report the first relatively ample information on the Sanemá and Yabarana. /14/ /Map appears here./

/15/ The three weeks which we spent among the Panare were very laborious, and the time among the Sanemá was very hard physically.

In spite of these difficulties, which in comparison with those of a voyage at the beginning of the century are insignificant, the zone is open for any type of communication. One can go by airplane to Caicara, Puerto Ayacucho, San Juan de Manapiare, and Cucurí (between the Tenqua and Oso Falls). Thus, for a special study of the Panare one can go from Caracas to Caicara on a flight of a few hours and then continue by jeep and arrive on the same day at the first bohio of the Panare. In order to study the Piaroa, one goes by airplane as far as Puerto Ayacucho and then on by foot or by curiara. The Yabarana can be visited in the dry season, going by regular flight to Puerto Ayacucho and from there to San Juan de Manapiare by a flight lasting 30 minutes in a small plane. One reaches the houses of the Yabarana on the same say, and in two days more the "Monteros," the most autochthonous of this tribe. In order to reach Makiritare territory and the Sanemá of the upper Ventuari, one goes by airplane to Puerto Ayacucho on a regular flight and then on to Cacurí on a flight lasting 50 minutes more or less in a small plane. In

[text continues on p. 6]

Y /15 cont./

● 122 no case are more than three or four days needed in order to get
M to the site of study, and the cost is relatively low. The Waica
[122] and Samatari live in a remote corner of Venezuela. On a recent trip, however, we left Caracas at seven in the morning and were among the Waica of the Padamo at five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. We spent five hours flying and three in a fast curiara.

On a reconnaissance trip of long duration, such as the one we made for this present report, one needs to go more slowly in a curiara, stopping among the tribes, streams, and mountains. The only zone difficult to reach is that of the "Monteros" and
Y Chicano of the Sierra Guamapí.

The Orinoco-Ventuari region represents the secondary
133 western massif /macizo/ of the Macizo de Guayana, with eleva-
122 tions above 2,000 meters. The most difficult ascent in the region was the zone south of the Raudal Alto on the Cuchivero, toward the Sierra Guamapí, and the ford of the Salto Mono on the Upper Ventuari, where the level rises to more than 1,500 meters (cf. physical map /see p. 7 /). The traversing of the Salto Mono, particularly the ascent during the rainy season, is an extremely
M dangerous stretch, and one must spend at least a whole day to
[482] go and six hours to return. The Makiritare go up in six hours and
[482] come down in four hours with a load of 20-30 kilograms on their backs. We came down with 20 Sanemá and 30 Makiritare in only five hours, but such a marathon is extremely tiring. On the other hand, to cross the Mono in two days is an extraordinarily beautiful excursion because of the characteristics of this mountain and its gigantic forest, which at times allows an open view /16/ /map
M appears here/ /17/ and one can gaze on an enchanting panorama.
122 The Makiritare keep the wide path (over two meters) always open
[487] and in good repair, and at the upper port they built a house in
[485] which to rest and spend the night. There one finds curiaras with
[501] which one can follow the river to the Makiritare and Sanemá rancherías located on the headwaters of the same. From the port of Mono upriver as far as the headwaters there are no further obstacles for navigation, and the river permits easy access to all the Makiritare villages of the Upper Ventuari. We call Upper

[text continues on p. 8]

BLOOD GROUP ANTIGEN TESTS OF THE WAICA INDIANS OF VENEZUELA.[1]

MIGUEL LAYRISSE, ZULAY LAYRISSE, AND JOHANNES WILBERT

GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INFORMATION

128 INTRODUCTION: For the purpose of the present paper we would like to classify the Waica as a subcribe of the Yanoama tribe, the ethnic identification and the internal composition of which appears to be but little understood. Although the actual blood group study will be concerned with the Waica Indians most particularly, we shall, nevertheless, include as well some information on the Yanoama tribe in general. This, we trust, will not only serve to locate the specific Waica data within a wider frame of reference, but also to facilitate the comprehension of the theoretical considerations based thereon.

131 *Ethnic identification.* The Yanoama inhabit a very extensive area between 0°30'-5° N and 62°-65° W, which includes the headwaters of the Paragua, Caura, Venturi, Padamo, Ocamo, Mavaca, and Orinoco rivers of Venezuela, as well as those of the Uraricuera, Catrimani, Dimini, and Araçá rivers of Brazil. The Sierra Parima crosses this heavily forested territory like a vertebral column, so to speak, and marks at the same time the frontier between the Venezuelan and the Brazilian parts of the Yanoama land (see map, Fig. 1).

101 The Yanoama are surrounded by Tropical Forest Indians with Neo-Indian culture types; Cariban tribes enclose them in a semi-circle to the northeast, while Arawakan peoples bound them in a semicircle to the southwest. Thus, the Yanoama seem to have been functioning as a buffer between the Caribs and the Arawak, successfully resisting any attempts of intrusion by such groups as the Sanz (Maiongong), the Pemon, and others. In recent years, after their Carib neighbours had suffered a marked decline in numbers and in strength, the Yanoama ventured northward into the Venturi, Caura, and Paragua drainage area, intruding into Carib territory for more than 100 km.

114 Although sporadic and rather casual information on the several Yanoama groups have been published by various authors since early Colonial time, it is only

122 1 We wish to thank Dr A. Bori and Odilo Castillo (División de Malariología, Ministerio de Sanidad, Venezuela) and the Misión Salesiana of the Territorio Federal Amazonas for their collaboration in collecting the blood samples. We are also indebted to Esperanza García for her technical assistance. We are greatly indebted to J. P. O'Riordan (The National Blood Transfusion Association, Dublin), M. Shapiro (The South African Blood Transfusion Service, Johannesburg), R. R. Rosenfield (The Mount Sinai Hospital, New York), and Alvin Mauer (The Minneapolis Memorial Blood Bank, Minnesota) for supplying us with critical anti-sera.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

123 idea, so I kept my eye on the lady in case developments came quicker than was expected.

The day arrived when I believed my silent surveillance would be crowned with success. Actually I had fallen into an innocent error. By way of compensation, I certainly got a good laugh out of it. I had tailed the woman along a path fairly new to me, which she had taken as if she had no wish to advertise her whereabouts. I knew the path in its early stages, but had always assumed that it ended in a thick clump of bushes, progress being further discouraged by a big fallen tree-trunk. But when I reached this obstacle I saw no sign of my quarry. I then saw that the tree-trunk could be pushed aside, to reveal a fork in the path. From this point the track was well-worn, leading a good distance away from the hut. It didn't need much mental effort for me to realise what a clumsy mistake I had made. Behind a tree an Indian was attending to Nature's needs. I had ended up in the Guaycas' privy. The old man sent up a growl of protest at this intrusion of a bearded one in the sacred retreat. The only thing left to me was to turn back, with the air of having wandered there by chance.

514 It is interesting to observe that the Indians, while generally immodest to the point of indecency, regard the bodily functions as a matter for reticence and secrecy. They squat like women to urinate and for other purposes seek some remote and hidden place, as if well aware of the defencelessness of their situation at these moments. Thus they obey not only the all-important principles of hygiene, but those of security: and in a world like theirs, security is the more important.

123 That same day we witnessed another interesting operation, if one of a different nature. On the morrow we were to start for Llanturilla and the Shirians had already prepared a good supply of bananas and *mapuri* which they were bringing up in another boat. On the eve of this expedition every man jack we had engaged for it had disappeared—except Luis Antonio, who was swinging in his hammock with the public woman at his side.

[122] [302] 'They've gone to get their hair cut in the other hut,' he told me, when I asked where they all could be—for all the world as if he was saying: 'They're at the barber's shop round the corner.'

302 123 We went off to the other hut, anxious to see the fun. It was Caio's turn. He was squatting on the ground in front of a pimply young woman who must have been his wife. She was giving him a perfect pudding-basin haircut, using instead of scissors the nails of her thumb and forefinger, which with the Indians

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

are extremely strong. One quick nip did all that was necessary, and the nails worked with the precision of a pair of hairclippers. Beside her she had a little heap of fine ash, into which she dipped her fingers after every two or three nips. Hairs which interfered with the desired style were plucked out in a manner which might have been expected to bring cries of pain from the patient, but Caio only smiled his usual sweet smile, as if he was apologizing for causing so much trouble.

This operation went on for a good many hours, and we didn't see the end of it. But that evening Caio, Sempronio, and Narcissus trooped into the big hut, proudly displaying haircuts of an enviable perfection.

V

Delay appeared to be the order of the day on the island. Uarema's brother, the elderly one, failed to show up. We were waiting for him because we hoped he might prove a source of further information, and there was also a possibility that he might come with us, taking the place of the expectant father. We passed the time swimming, and walking through the Sooo plantations, which had now been almost strangled by the forest. After turning over practically every leaf, we found a few ripe pawpaws and plenty of *tapi*. The first-named is almost a wild fruit in this region: the Indians cultivate a small type no bigger than an orange but full of flavour. The second is the doubtful fruit of one of the solanaceæ, in shape, colour and flavour halfway between a tomato and a melon. We cooked these sometimes with salt, sometimes with sugar, and turned them into a kind of marmalade. At the first tasting it aroused our enthusiasm, but at the next it made us sick. We were forced to find some substitute for our provisions, now reduced to very small quantities: we had no rice, tinned meat or white flour left, besides being out of other more important commodities, but we still had plenty of coffee—though not sugar—and salt and powdered milk.

All our expeditions from now on, especially the Samatari venture which we were silently preparing, would have to rely on hunting and fishing for supplies. All we could take with us was coffee, which Enrico and I could drink unsweetened, and plenty of salt, with a little powdered milk 'in case of sickness', we told each other cheerfully. For this contingency, we didn't lack for medical supplies. As always, we had more than we could comfortably carry.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

122 ●

It did not take us a great deal of time to organize the expedition. The question of food supplies didn't arise. We had given the little we had left to Jean. We were going among the Samatari like Samatari ourselves. The forest land of Uagna and the Rio Branco was waiting for us with its tapirs and its deer, serenely at pasture in the rich water-grass; with its ripened fruits falling from the trees into streams of dark water; with its birds whose crops were full of that fruit, and its fish which no barbasco had threatened for decades now, ever since the Guayca migrated to the north; with its fat grubs forming white silken cocoons in the trees. In the sharpness of our longing for the uncharted scene and for peoples still unknown, we saw ourselves already, in our imagination, plunging into the hidden depths of the forest, and the forest, in its turn, taking us to its bosom like a mother, boundlessly wise, providing for all our needs.

Hashimo arrived the next day and so far as we could judge from the preparations he had made and the quantity of arrows he was carrying, he had decided to come with us. So began the palavers between the four of us—Enrico and I on one side, Uarema and Hashimo on the other. We went into everything. Hashimo had lived as a boy in the region we wanted to explore; he knew the Samatari and at times he claimed to be on friendly terms with them, so that it was he more than anyone who knew the problems we might have to face. From the Samatari 'gate', which we had already seen on the Uagna, our path lay over exactly thirty-two hills. The Indian made the same gesture as he would have used to greet us and numbered them off with his hand, his eyes closed and the whole scene passing in front of his mind's eye. Thirty-two—not one less—and some so high that the speaker groaned with exhaustion as he enumerated them, as if he were trying to push some great stone over the top. After these hills, which would mean a six days' march from the landing, one reached the River Araccua. After descending that, there was the Parima (the Shirian name for the Upper Uraricoera), as far as a big falls. Then more *pilikio* and *manoshi* —daily stages and night stops—and landmarks on the way, until the traveller came to the Samatari. [103]

Considering that this people ranged like monkeys over a region which extended for hundreds of miles, we could not understand how he could be so definite about their present whereabouts—especially since he hadn't seen the place himself for many years. But the Indian mind is capable of subtleties beyond our imagining.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema
Makiritare 55 20

Arecoa. There was something about the ring of the name. At last I pinned it down. I had seen it in an account of the journeys made by a certain Theodor Koch-Grünberg—a German who from 1911 to 1913 made a long trip from the Roraima savannah to the Upper Orinoco. He left a record of it in a famous five-volume work—a worthy monument to his venture. In Makiritari, *awarra* means 'gum': it is a corruption of the old Spanish word *arcabuco*—arquebus. Koch-Grünberg had reached its mouth, and it was here that he made his first contact with the Shirianas. Unfortunately he was unable to keep in touch with them for any length of time and only visited the isolated elements he met with in the course of his journey.

This German explorer naturally made the expedition in the company of Makushi and Makiritari Indians, who live in holy terror of the tribes they call Guaharibo. Their fear may not always be justified, for a good many Guaharibo have now settled down to a mild and perfectly harmless way of life. But they still arouse a rancorous contempt in other tribes. Koch-Grünberg returned to the same region eleven years later, when he made the journey up the Rio Branco, irresistibly drawn towards these people whom he could not understand and whom he described in his book as forming an '*isolierte Gruppe*'—an isolated group, with no affinities to other races. But at the very gateway of their world he died of fever, and his expedition (which had been organized by Hamilton-Rice) after losing its chief, packed its bags and turned south again.

VI

We left for the Samatari country on March 16th, accompanied by Ucerma, Sempronio, and Hashimo, the latter's fee as guide being nothing less than my own fur jacket. Caio, for some inexplicable reason, had quietly declined to come with us. We embarked in a canoe acquired from Pancho's father, and in this swift, light craft we made easy progress up the flooded Merevari.

Heavy rain set in, for whole days at a time. Progress slowed down. The Indians grew weary and there was no more singing and laughter from them. The second evening out, when we had slung our hammocks in a hut we had made on an earlier trip, Luis Antonio told us that his brother wanted to quit: there was not enough curare—we had brought about twenty pounds.

"You had time to prepare as much as you wanted," I answered him shortly,

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

Pulipuli—the only one then known to exist—could pick out an assassin from a group of ten men gathered for his ceremonies of exorcism. After a few passes made by the wizard, the guilty man lost his hair at one fell swoop, and was thus unmasked.

Endowed as I was with unimaginable powers, I became the *labalia*. I was called 'Labalieman'. My watch, by the aid of which I could see the passing of the hours, predict the weather, forestall the course of journeys and cure certain ills (by applying it to the affected part) had also been promoted. No longer was it mere medicine-man's magic, but labalia's magic.

VI

We were now an integral part of the Samatari tribe and in certain respects their moral leaders. The chief, glorying in his (our) red drawers, gave us the benefit of strange daily discourses in which he seemed to be inviting us to take part in his counsels and share in the planning of tribal activities. I had begun to learn the language, which had already interested me in the Casiraouni days, and was able to reply with a few more or less appropriate words, hoping that they would fit in with what I imagined he was talking about. My efforts were generally crowned with success and everyone shouted with glee at the sight of a white man speaking Shirian.

The world the Indians know, within the limits of their primitive conception, is a boundless forest criss-crossed by rivers and water-courses flowing in every direction. The final destination of these streams is not understood, or even thought of. In the centre of this forest is the tribe itself. Over there are other Indians, known only to few and spoken of from time to time. Somewhere in the same forest there are Indians with beards and clothes, outboard motors and guns—terrible Indians, tall in stature and always bad, angry men: such is the first impression occidentals make on these more apathetic wild peoples. The two of us, envoys of these distant Indians, had shown that we were not such bad men, and not in such a perpetual rage. In all humility and simplicity, we had become part and parcel of the Samatari themselves, and they on their side did not lack a real and disinterested friendliness towards us, as witness the behaviour of the boys, our admirers, who never lost a chance of overwhelming us with their kindness. That I should speak their language was the most wonderful

/433 cont./

121 Messrs. Eugene Higdem, Byron Reihart, and Joe Jenkins, and the late Flora Troxel.

124 The information concerning the area of Brazil inhabited by the Guaika /Waica/ has been gathered from oral reports made to me by several men who said that they had worked upstream /434/ on the rivers of Brazil, within or near Guaika Territory. This information, although fragmentary and not absolutely certain, has helped us nevertheless to form a more complete picture of the Guaika tribe as a whole.

Orientation

101
131 The Guaika /Waica/ tribe inhabits the region of the Upper Orinoco and its tributaries above the outlet of the Ocamo River, including also the south bank of the Ocamo itself. In addition, the Guaika tribe extends into the territory of Brazil, occupying the headwaters of several tributaries of the Branco and Negro rivers (see the map /see p. 6 /).

The tribe located to the north, the Guajaribo /Guaharibo/, inhabits the north bank of the Ocamo River, the valley of the Padamo River, and the headwaters of the Caura River, and is also found in Brazil on the headwaters of the Uraricoera River, a tributary of the Branco River. The Guajaribo come downriver frequently as far as La Esmeralda, and on occasion even come as far as the mouth of the Cunucunuma River. It has been reported that they have been seen as far to the east as the Paragua River in the state of Bolívar (see map).

197 The Guaika and Guajaribo Indians speak the same language, but there are several observable dialectical differences which make it possible to distinguish immediately by their speech whether they belong to the one group or to the other. I make this observation on the basis of my studies of the Guaika language spoken in El Platanal and its comparison with samples of the Guajaribo dialect collected by Flora Troxel and by me in La Esmeralda and Ioeitedi.

[121]
[122]

9:Grellier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica

forward to meet him and he introduced himself as James Barker of the Evangelist Mission of San Fernando de Atabapo. He told me that he and a companion now up at the village had been living with the Waikas for the past seven months. He added that the Indians had sunk the boat in which they had come so that they were now quite isolated. He spoke their language fluently and his attitude to them was that of an indulgent schoolmaster.

I told him of our desire to see the village and he spoke about it to the Waikas. They were at once suspicious and reluctant; even when they eventually agreed, agreement was far from unanimous. Nevertheless, we fell in behind Barker and marched up a slippery path so muddy that I began to envy the forest people their nakedness. We came to a recently made clearing which had been cleared by fire and I tried to slip away up a little-used path. At once the Indians objected, their vehemence suggesting that the plantation to which the path probably led hid many wonderful secrets.

After twenty minutes of marching we came to a fence in a clearing. The fence was made of stakes lashed together forming a perfect circle. I thought this must be the village but we passed it by. A hundred yards beyond we came to another similar enclosure and this time our guides led us inside. As we entered I remembered what Pierre Ivanoff had told me of an earlier occasion when he and three companions had succeeded in reaching a Waika village. The first enclosure we had just seen was undoubtedly the counterpart of the one in which he had been forced to dance with his hosts before being allowed to go on to the second. In the present instance the dance was omitted from our programme.

Inside the enclosure, which was some thirty yards across, huts were built with their backs to the palisade, leaving a circular space in the middle shaded by a big tree. The corner of each hut consisted of three stakes in the form of a tripod supporting horizontal rafters of green wood tied in place by lianas. Wide-eaved roofs were thatched with banana leaves. The circle of fencing was unbroken except for the single entry. A pungent, musty smell pervaded the place as we

10:Chagnon E-4.5 (1964-1966) 1967 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS[1]

OOO I am indebted to a number of the faculty members of the Anthropology Department for their guidance, counsel and personal attention during the course of my undergraduate and graduate program. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to Professors Marvin J. Meggitt, Marshall D. Sahlins, Elman R. Service, Leslie A. White, and Eric R. Wolf for all they have done to assist me in planning and carrying out my curriculum and field work. Whatever may prove to be of worth in this dissertation derives ultimately from the training I received from them.

I owe special thanks to Dr. Robert L. Carneiro and Dr. Gertrude E. Dole for assisting me in particular phases of my field preparations and for the innumerable personal kindnesses they showed me before, during and after my field work among the Yanomamö.

114 a 122 During the seventeen months I spent in Venezuela planning and conducting my field work, a large number of people rendered me invaluable assistance. I wish to express my gratitude to the Staff of the Venezuelan Air Force Transport Group No. 6 for transporting me and my equipment into

[122] [1]This investigation was supported in part by a Public Health Service Predoctoral Fellowship F1 MH-25, 052, and an attached Research Grant MH 10575-01 BEH R04 from the National Institute of Mental Health.

114 and out of the Federal Territory of Amazonas, and to
122 Commander Dr. David Capriles of the Medical Section for assisting me in making these arrangements. I also wish to thank Dr. Armando Caballín T. of the Amazonas District of the Venezuelan Malaria Control Service (Malariología) for generously placing the facilities of that organization at my disposal, and for arranging the purchase and transportation of many of my supplies.

I am personally indebted to Dr. Marcel Roche, Director of the Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research (I.V.I.C.), and to Dr. Miguel Layrisse, Chairman of the Physiopathology Department of that institute, for their cooperation in and assistance to my field work.

122 A number of Missionaries gave me invaluable assistance in the Yąnomamö language and generously placed the resources of their missions at my disposal. I particularly wish to thank Mr. James P. Barker and Mr. Cecil Neese of the New Tribes Mission, and Padre Luiz Cocco and Padre José Berno of the Salesian Mission for their generous aid.

115 I thank Kąobɨ̈wä, headman of Upper Bisaasi-tedi, for
124 his assistance and cooperation in the collection of some of the genealogical data; without his aid my data would have serious gaps.

I wish to thank Dr. James V. Neel, Chairman of the Department of Human Genetics at the University of Michigan, for encouraging and personally supporting my field work, and for generously making departmental office space available

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Acknowledgments

The research on which this monograph is based was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health Predoctoral Fellowship Fl MH-25-052 and attached grant MH 10575-01 BEH RO4 and an Atomic Energy Commission Area Grant AT(11-1)-1552. I am also indebted to the faculty and administration of Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas (I.V.I.C.) for their cooperation and support. I wish also to thank the members of the Staff of the Air Force of Venezuela and Brazil for transporting me and my equipment into and out of the Yanomamö area. I am equally indebted to the Venezuelan Malariologia personnel who arranged for the purchase and transportation of many of my supplies. My sincere thanks also to the members of the New Tribes Mission and Salesian Mission, whose kindness and cooperation made my field work more pleasant than it might otherwise have been. I am grateful to Professors Eric Wolf, Mervyn Meggitt, James Neel, Elman Service, and Leslie White of my Ph.D. committee for many useful suggestions; this monograph is based in part on my doctoral thesis, and their criticisms have been incorporated into the present work. I wish to thank Professors Marshall Sahlins, Eric Wolf, and Lévi-Strauss for reading earlier drafts of some of the chapters in the present monograph. I thank my wife Carlene for her patience in reading portions of the text and offering her helpful criticisms. Finally, I wish to thank my brother, Verdun P. Chagnon, for his artistic rendition of Figure 2-4.

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Ann Arbor, Michigan
May 1968

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Doing Fieldwork among the Yąnomamö

THE YĄNOMAMÖ[1] INDIANS live in southern Venezuela and the adjacent portions of northern Brazil (see frontispiece map, p. iv). Some 125 widely scattered villages have populations ranging from 40 to 250 inhabitants, with 75 to 80 people the most usual number. In total numbers their population probably approaches 10,000 people, but this is merely a guess. Many of the villages have not yet been contacted by outsiders, and nobody knows for sure exactly how many uncontacted villages there are, or how many people live in them. By comparison to African or Melanesian tribes, the Yąnomamö population is small. Still, they are one of the largest unacculturated tribes left in all of South America.

But they have a significance apart from tribal size and cultural purity: the Yąnomamö are still actively conducting warfare. It is in the nature of man to fight, according to one of their myths, because the blood of "Moon" spilled on this layer of the cosmos, causing men to become fierce. I describe the Yąnomamö as "the fierce people" because that is the most accurate single phrase that describes them. That is how they conceive themselves to be, and that is how they would like others to think of them.

I spent nineteen months with the Yąnomamö,[2] during which time I acquired some proficiency in their language and, up to a point, submerged myself in their culture and way of life.

[1]The word Yąnomamö is nasalized through its entire length, indicated by the diacritical mark [ą]. When this mark appears on a word, the entire word is nasalized. The terminal vowel [-ö] represents a sound that does not occur in the English language. It corresponds to the phone [ə] of linguistic orthography. In normal conversation, Yąnomamö is pronounced like "Yah-no-mama," except that it is nasalized. Finally, the words having the [-i] vowel are pronounced as that vowel with the "uh" sound of "duck." Thus, the name Kąshowë would be pronounced "cow-ha-wuh," again nasalized.

[2]I spent a total of twenty-three months in South America of which nineteen were spent among the Yąnomamö on three separate field trips. The first trip, November 1964 through February 1966, was to Venezuela. During this time I spent thirteen months in direct contact with the Yąnomamö, using my periodic trips back to Caracas to visit my family and to collate the genealogical data I had collected up to that point. On my second trip, January through March 1967, I spent two months among Brazilian Yąnomamö and one more month with the Venezuelan Yąnomamö. Finally, I returned to Venezuela for three more months among the Yąnomamö, January through April 1968.

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114 123 gineering to anthropology in the first place. I had not eaten all day, I was soaking wet from perspiration, the gnats were biting me, and I was covered with red pigment, the result of a dozen or so complete examinations I had been given by as many burly Indians. [5x5] These examinations capped an otherwise grim day. The Indians would blow their noses into their hands, flick as much of the mucus off that would separate in a snap of the wrist, wipe the residue into their hair, and then carefully examine my face, arms, legs, hair, and the contents of my pockets. I asked Mr. Barker how to say "Your hands are dirty"; my comments were met by the Indians in the following way: They would "clean" their hands by spitting a quantity of slimy tobacco juice into them, rub them together, and then proceed with the examination.

Mr. Barker and I crossed the river and slung our hammocks. When he pulled his hammock out of a rubber bag, a heavy, disagreeable odor of mildewed cotton came with it. "Even the missionaries are filthy," I thought to myself. Within two weeks, everything I owned smelled the same way, and I lived with that odor for the remainder of the fieldwork. My own habits of personal cleanliness reached such levels that I didn't even mind being examined by the Indians, as I was not much cleaner than they were after I had adjusted to the circumstances.

So much for my discovery that primitive man is not the picture of nobility and sanitation I had conceived him to be. I soon discovered that it was an enormously time-consuming task to maintain my own body in the manner to which it had grown accustomed in the relatively antiseptic environment of the northern United States. Either I could be relatively well fed and relatively comfortable in a fresh change of clothes and do very little fieldwork, or, I could do considerably more fieldwork and be less well fed and less comfortable.

114 122 It is appalling how complicated it can be to make oatmeal in the jungle. First, I had to make two trips to the river to haul the water. Next, I had to prime my kerosene stove with alcohol and get it burning, a tricky procedure when you are trying to mix powdered milk and fill a coffee pot at the same time: the alcohol prime always burned out before I could turn the kerosene on, and I would have to start all over. Or, I would turn the kerosene on, hoping that the element was still hot enough to vaporize the fuel, and start a small fire in my palm-thatched hut as the liquid kerosene squirted all over the table and walls and ignited. It was safer to start over with the alcohol. Then I had to boil the oatmeal and pick the bugs out of it. All my supplies, of course, were carefully stored in Indian-proof, rat-proof, moisture-proof, and insect-proof containers, not one of which ever served its purpose adequately. Just taking things out of the multiplicity of containers and repacking them afterward was a minor project in itself. By the time I had hauled the water to cook with, unpacked my food, prepared the oatmeal, milk, and coffee, heated water for dishes, washed and dried the dishes, repacked the food in the containers, stored the containers in locked trunks and cleaned up my mess, the ceremony of preparing breakfast had brought me almost up to lunch time!

Eating three meals a day was out of the question. I solved the problem by eating a single meal that could be prepared in a single container, or, at most, in two containers, washed my dishes only when there were no clean ones left, using cold river water, and wore each change of clothing at least a week to cut down on my laundry problem, a courageous undertaking in the tropics. I was also less concerned about sharing my provisions with the rats, insects, Indians, and the elements, thereby eliminating the need

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for my complicated storage process. I was able to last most of the day on *café con leche*, heavily sugared espresso coffee diluted about five to one with hot milk. I would prepare this in the evening and store it in a thermos. Frequently, my single meal was no more complicated than a can of sardines and a package of crackers. But at least two or three times a week I would do something sophisticated, like make oatmeal or boil rice and add a can of tuna fish or tomato paste to it. I even saved time by devising a water system that obviated the trips to the river. I had a few sheets of zinc roofing brought in and made a rain-water trap; I caught the water on the zinc surface, funneled it into an empty gasoline drum, and then ran a plastic hose from the drum to my hut. When the drum was exhausted in the dry season, I hired the Indians to fill it with water from the river.

I ate much less when I traveled with the Indians to visit other villages. Most of the time my travel diet consisted of roasted or boiled green plantains (see Glossary) that I obtained from the Indians, but I always carried a few cans of sardines with me in case I got lost or stayed away longer than I had planned. I found peanut butter and crackers a very nourishing food, and a simple one to prepare on trips. It was nutritious and portable, and only one tool was required to prepare the meal, a hunting knife that could be cleaned by wiping the blade on a leaf. More importantly, it was one of the few foods the Indians would let me eat in relative peace. It looked too much like animal feces to them to excite their appetites.

I once referred to the peanut butter as the dung of cattle. They found this quite repugnant. They did not know what "cattle" were, but were generally aware that I ate several canned products of such an animal. I perpetrated this myth, if for no other reason than to have some peace of mind while I ate. Fieldworkers develop strange defense mechanisms, and this was one of my own forms of adaptation. On another occasion I was eating a can of frankfurters and growing very weary of the demands of one of my guests for a share in my meal. When he asked me what I was eating, I replied: "Beef." He then asked, "What part of the animal are you eating?" to which I replied, "Guess!" He stopped asking for a share.

Meals were a problem in another way. Food sharing is important to the Yąnomamö in the context of displaying friendship. "I am hungry," is almost a form of greeting with them. I could not possibly have brought enough food with me to feed the entire village, yet they seemed not to understand this. All they could see was that I did not share my food with them at each and every meal. Nor could I enter into their system of reciprocities with respect to food; every time one of them gave me something "freely," he would dog me for months to pay him back, not with food, but with steel tools. Thus, if I accepted a plantain from someone in a different village while I was on a visit, he would most likely visit me in the future and demand a machete as payment for the time that he "fed" me. I usually reacted to these kinds of demands by giving a banana, the customary reciprocity in their culture—food for food—but this would be a disappointment for the individual who had visions of that single plantain growing into a machete over time.

Despite the fact that most of them knew I would not share my food with them at their request, some of them always showed up at my hut during mealtime. I gradually became accustomed to this and learned to ignore their persistent demands while I ate. Some of them would get angry because I failed to give in, but most of them accepted